DOCUMENT RESUME

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ABSTRACT

Based on meetings of educators representing the diversity of literacy organizations in Texas, this pamphlet addresses the need for a balanced and comprehensive approach to reading instruction--an approach that recognizes the importance of phonemic awareness, explicit letter-sound instruction, and word recognition practice as well as focused comprehension instruction and significant experience with literature. It briefly describes seven implications for balanced reading instruction; 11 assumptions for delivery of balanced reading instruction; five implications for professional development; and three implications for community involvement. The pamphlet also lists 15 literacy organizations in Texas. (RS)

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Good Practice: Implications for Reading Instruction. Consensus Document of Texas Literacy Professional Organizations.

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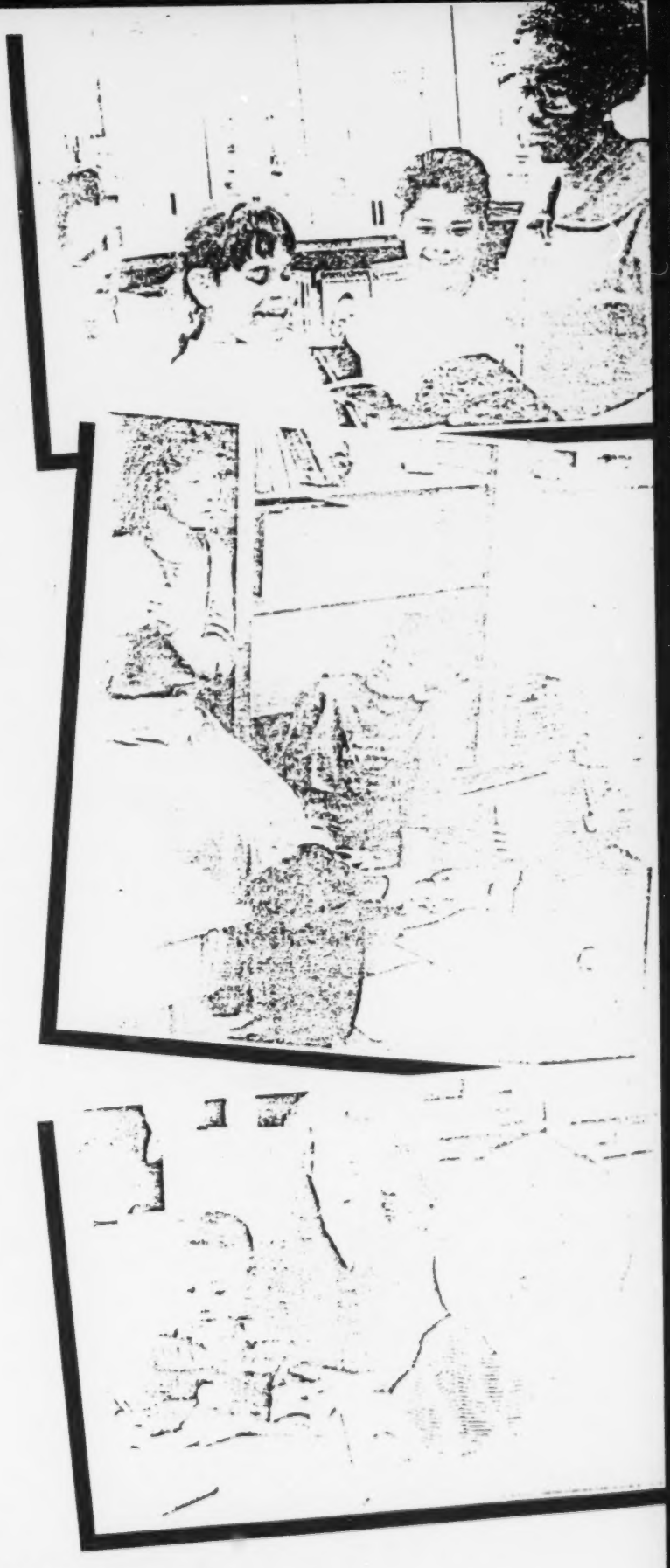
Introduction

In the Spring of 1996 a group of educators representing the diversity of literacy organizations in Texas, came together to address some of the issues in reading instruction facing the public schools in Texas.

These educators donated their time to this task and through a series of honest and sometimes emotional meetings came to understand each other's point of view. The resulting document *Good Practice: Implications for Reading Instruction - A Consensus Document of Texas Literacy Professional Organizations* addresses the need for a balanced and comprehensive approach to reading instruction. An approach that recognizes the importance of phonemic awareness, explicit letter-sound instruction, and word recognition practice, as well as, focused comprehension instruction and significant experience with literature.

I applaud these educators and the organizations they represent for their willingness to discuss diverse points of view and to listen and learn from each other. The framework they have created permits all of us to gain a better understanding of the direction in which our state must be moving.

Mike Moses
Commissioner of Education



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Organizations

- Baylor University
- Central Texas Whole Language Association
- Coalition of English and Reading Supervisors of Texas (CREST)
- Kindergarten Teachers of Texas (KTOT)
- Neuhaus Education Center
- Orton Dyslexia Society
- Quality English Standards for Texas (QuEST)
- Scottish Rite Hospital
- Southwest Texas State University
- Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading (TAIR)
- Texas Association of Administrators and Supervisors of Programs for Young Children (TAASPYC)
- Texas Association of School Librarians
- Texas Association of Bilingual Educators
- Texas Council of Teachers of English (TCTE)
- Texas State Reading Association (TSRA)

Good Practice: Implications for Reading Instruction

A Consensus Document of Texas Literacy Professional Organizations

COMMISSIONER'S GROUP ON READING

(TX)

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Good Practice: Implications for Reading Instruction

In balanced reading instruction, students are taught both how to use the structure of language and how to construct meaning from various texts. The relative balance of instruction varies according to students' reading abilities and needs.

- Students are read to and engage in varied language experiences. These activities support and extend oral language development and help students connect oral to written language.
- Students engage in decoding and spelling activities through highly organized explicit and implicit instructions in appropriate skills and strategies, including phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge, sound/symbol correspondence, structural analysis, contextual clues, and learning high-frequency words in order to read increasingly complex text fluently and accurately.
- Students engage in comprehensive activities which include both explicit and implicit instructions in appropriate skills and strategies in order to evaluate, synthesize , analyze, connect, infer and inquire.
- Students engage in activities to develop concepts and vocabulary in order to build knowledge and read increasingly complex texts.
- Student read both orally and silently from a variety of high-quality fiction and nonfiction texts at both independent and instructional levels across the curriculum, including, as often as possible, texts in the students' first language.
- Students write to support and extend their knowledge of the structure of language, and construct meaning.
- Students engage in a variety of assessment activities. Assessments include periodic standardized tests, when appropriate, and ongoing informal evaluations that assist in determining the students abilities and needs, as well as, the effectiveness of instruction. Examples of informal assessment include self-monitoring, teacher observation of both oral and silent reading, student portfolios, and conferences with parents. Ideally second language learners are assessed in the language in which they are most proficient.

Assumptions for Delivery of Balanced Reading Instruction

The following assumptions guide the delivery of balanced reading instruction.

- Instruction includes information on how to use the structure of language and how to construct meaning from various texts.
- Students read, write, and are read to on a daily basis.
- Beginning readers practice fluency in predictable texts and decodable texts with phonetically regular patterns.
- A broad range of assessment informs teachers' instructional decisions.
- Instruction is based on knowledge of literacy acquisition.
- Teachers intervene early and quickly with appropriate instructional strategies when students do not progress.

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- Effective reading instruction focuses on teaching each student rather than teaching a reading program.
- Students read for a variety of purposes.
- Students read both self-selected and teacher-assigned literature and textbooks.
- Appropriate and adequate resources, including technology, should be readily available for instruction to students, teachers, and parents.
- Students should have open access to libraries and opportunities to learn in them.

Implications for Professional Development

The effective implementation of balanced reading instruction requires quality professional preparation and continuous professional growth.

- Teachers, administrators, supervisors, instructional leaders, and other educational decision makers should have specific preparation for the implementation of a balanced reading program.
- Professional development for teachers, administrators, supervisors, and other instructional leaders is based on sound research, focuses on improving reading instruction, and provides ongoing, follow-up support.
- Teachers, administrators, supervisors, and other instructional leaders are prepared with a variety of strategies and techniques to meet the needs of all students including those with linguistic cultural, and learning differences.
- Teachers, administrators, supervisors, and other instructional leaders at all levels and content areas need continuous opportunities to maintain skill and knowledge in the field of reading.
- Professional development opportunities should be collaboratively planned and aligned with student performance and campus goals and needs.

Implications for Community Involvement

The school, home, and community, including the private sector, all play crucial roles in supporting literacy acquisition and in providing balanced reading instruction.

- Parents and the public need to be informed about balanced reading instruction and the supportive role that they can play.
- Parents, the public and educators should collaborate to produce a coordinated effort in support of literacy.
- Early childhood programs should be provided by the community and/or schools in order to enable all students to begin schools ready to learn.

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